Bullfighting Prohibition, a Controversial Decision: Tauromaquia Mexicana's Arguments Analysis

Alma Jiménez Aguilar

University of Guanajuato, Guanajuato, MEXICO
Division of Social Sciences and Humanities

Abstract

Bullfighting prohibition has been a highly controversial topic in Mexico since 1967. The first attempt to ban these activities in this country was done in 1867, by former president Benito Juárez (Vázquez Mantecón, 2013). While there are still people who support bullfighting events, some authors agree that nowadays, even in the countries where these events take place, citizens mostly disapprove of these practices (Cordeiro Rodrigues & Achino, 2017; Flores Mercado, 2023; Perales & Thouverez, 2014). However, legislation in many countries has been going back and forth regarding the prohibition of this type of event. Just to mention two, according to Badorrey Martín (2009) the first ban was a canonical prohibition by a Pope in 1567, which had to be revoked after it was not complied with. As for the civil law, Badorrey Martín (2009) acknowledges the Spanish king Carlos III to be the first leader who tried to ban bullfighting in 1787. Using Toulmin's argumentation model and Van Dijk's manipulation theory, this article analyses the arguments given by Tauromaquia Mexicana A.C. in favor of bullfighting. The findings suggest that while the document titled *Argumentos a favor de la tauromaquia* (Arguments in favor of bullfighting) presents incomplete arguments, there is a clear tendency to manipulation in them.

Keywords: bullfighting, matador, Toulmin's model, critical discourse analysis, Mexico, tauromaquia.

1. Introduction

For hundreds of years, the bullfighting tradition has survived and remained alive in many regions of Mexico. According to Tauromaquia Mexicana's (TA) website (https://tauromaquiamexicana.com.mx/), bullfighting arrived in Mexico in 1526, possibly because of Spain's conquest of the territory. Forty-one years later, in 1567 the first attempt to ban these events occurred in the Vatican by Pope Pius V (Widener, 2014). In Mexico, the prohibition of these activities first took place in 1867 through *Decreto 6169,* issued by former president Benito Juárez. Ever since then, a controversy between banning and acceptance has persisted (Vázquez Mantecón, 2013). Throughout history, bullfighting has been regarded as controversial, while some people consider them as beneficial for their societies. Other people consider that these events violate animal rights. According to Cohen (2014) there are around sixteen varieties of events where bulls are protagonists. In Mexico, the most common are known as *corrida de toros* and it may be man against bull by foot or mounted on a horse.

Correspondence: Alma Jiménez Aguilar, University of Guanajuato, Division of Social Sciences and Humanities, Guanajuato, MEXICO.
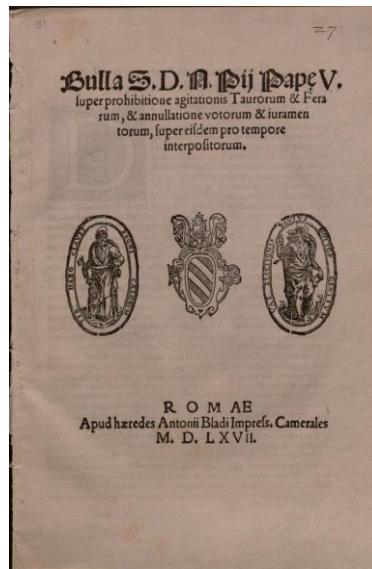
_____

Figure 1. A papal bull that prohibits bullfighting.
The first documented instance of such a prohibition

It is worth mentioning that during the process of writing this article, bullfighting in Mexico City was banned and later allowed again. As mentioned before, this struggle has persisted for centuries and does not seem to be close to ending in either direction.

The aim of this article is to present an analysis of the discourse used by TM to convince general public of the importance of bullfighting. The analysis centers on understanding how language has influenced this historical struggle. To achieve this, a document containing arguments supporting this activity underwent analysis. Initially, Toulmin's model of argumentation was applied to dissect the arguments. Next, Van Dijk's (2006) categories from his manipulation theory, specifically 'positive self-representation' and 'other negative representations' were used. The study is focused on uncovering the ideology expressed in the document titled *Argumentos a favor de la tauromaquia* (Arguments in favor of bullfighting) which was obtained from Tauromaquia Mexicana's website.

This article begins with a literature review to establish previous knowledge of the area. Then, a theoretical framework elucidating Toulmin's model of argumentation and Van Dijk's categories of representation are presented. These frameworks were used to analyze the impact of the lexical choices in this association's arguments and the use of language to represent the 'us' vs 'them' narrative. Subsequently, the methodology and research questions are outlined, followed by an overview of the data analysis and discussion. Lastly, the findings and a general discussion are provided.

2. Literature review

The relationship between humans and bulls has been documented since ancient times in many civilizations, each with different conceptualizations. Bulls were worshipped and venerated by Mesopotamic, Egyptian and Greek societies (Sáez, 1998). Additionally, during the same period, they were domesticated, around the year 6,500 B.C. (Cordero del Campillo, 2005). With this subordinated relationship some activities as livestock for human consumption and different kinds of entertainment employing animals and bulls in particular emerged.

One of these recreational events is the so-called *Fiesta Brava* (bullfighting). There is not an exact date of when this kind of entertainment began. Sáez (1998) states that it started at

least in the Roman empire. He also acknowledges that most literature related to the bullfighting origin agree on much more recent dates. Cohen (2014) for example situates its origins as we know them now, in the 17th century. Still, if we take the latest date, it has endured for hundreds of years, and throughout this time, there have been attempts to ban it. Still, in various countries, there are groups of people both in favor of and against these kinds of festivities. These groups mainly include people deeply identified with traditions and heritage values or on the other hand environmentalist associations.

Studies concerning bullfighting prohibition tend to provide opinions against or in favor of it (Ortíz Millan, 2014; Quintero Venegas & López López, 2018). However, linguistic analysis of the arguments from either side is scarce. Additionally, most of these studies have been conducted in Spain or Portugal. However, considering that Mexico is listed as the third country in the world where bullfighting takes place (Flores Mercado, 2023), it is surprising that there is not much research concerning this topic.

Discourse studies related to bullfighting are mostly conducted on media or jury documents, where researchers primarily analyze texts exploring relationships such as bullfighting and tourism, bullfighting and identities, and, as mentioned earlier, the relationship of bullfighting and culture. Nevertheless, to understand both points of view regarding this controversial topic, more discourse analysis on arguments in favor of or against bullfighting is needed. The focus of this article is specifically on the analysis of the arguments provided by the leading Mexican association that supports bullfighting events. The aim is to understand the ideology and beliefs behind the interest in preserving these kinds of events.

3. Theoretical framework

As reported by Metaxas, Potari and Zacharides (2026), since Plato's Republic, argumentation has held a central role in shaping our understanding and building knowledge. These authors also affirm that arguments may be used as well to go deeper on to someone's ideology and understanding of their practices. In order to achieve this, it is important to have some guidelines that help us identify the types of arguments one can build.

According to Simon (2008), Toulmin's model allows researchers to assess argument quality by identifying the number of components included in it. For this reason, this model seemed as the best option to guide the analysis of the document. While the use of this model has many advantaged, it is important to be aware of limitations. For instance, Simon (2008) warns researchers against concentrating solely on argument structure, as they might neglect the content of the argumentation. Nevertheless, for this article, the analysis of the content was supplemented by using additional theories.

The second part of this analysis consisted of identifying the ideology in the document using Van Dijk's theory of manipulation. As stated before, focusing solely on the structure of the argument might leave the analysis at a superficial level. By employing Van Dijk's theory of manipulation, the aim of this article is to unveil the underlying philosophy of these arguments. As Eggings (2005) suggests, we need ways to discuss how language not only represents but also actively shapes our perception of the world.

Lastly a general analysis of the ideologies underlying the overall arguments is presented. To do this, the revised theories were the human-animal relationship theory proposed by Nik Taylor, and Tania Signal (2011) and speciesism theory developed by Richard Ryder (2017).

3.1 *Toulmin's model of argumentation*

In his book *The uses of argument*, Stephen Toulmin compares arguments to an anatomical or physiological structure, where each unit of this structure plays a crucial role in its overall functionality. Just like living organisms, some arguments might appear to be unrelated or presented in different forms. However, certain arguments require more grounds or precise explanations than others. Crafting cogent arguments is not an easy task, given the wide variety of ways in which they can be presented. The author also mentions that "unless the assertion was made quite wildly and irresponsibly, we shall normally have some facts to which we can point in its support" (Toulmin, 2003: 90).

This model proposes six elements that every argument must satisfy: three main components and three complementary ones. According to this model, every argument must contain a first assertion or *claim* (C). Then, every claim should have some foundation or *data* (D). In some cases, the data may be not very explicit, leading the interlocutor to ask, "How do you get there?" (Toulmin, 2003: 90). According to this model, the answer that responds to this question is called the *warrant* (W). In other words, the warrant verifies that the transition from data to claim is valid. Another way to understand this is that data will usually be explicitly stated, while the warrant will mostly be implicit. Data and warrant may sometimes not be as explanatory of the claim. The author proposes the following visual to understand this distinction.
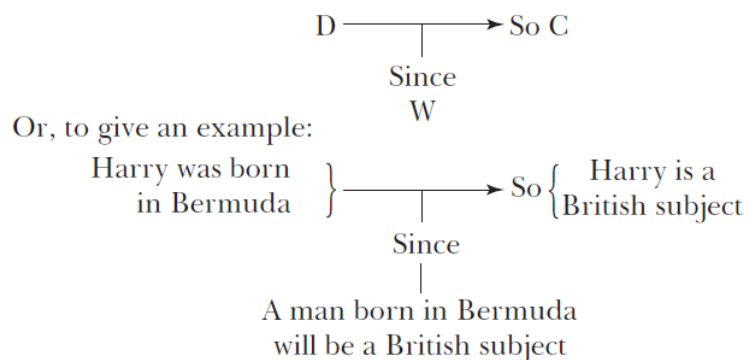
Note. This figure demonstrates Toulmin's classification and relationships for the main components of an argument.
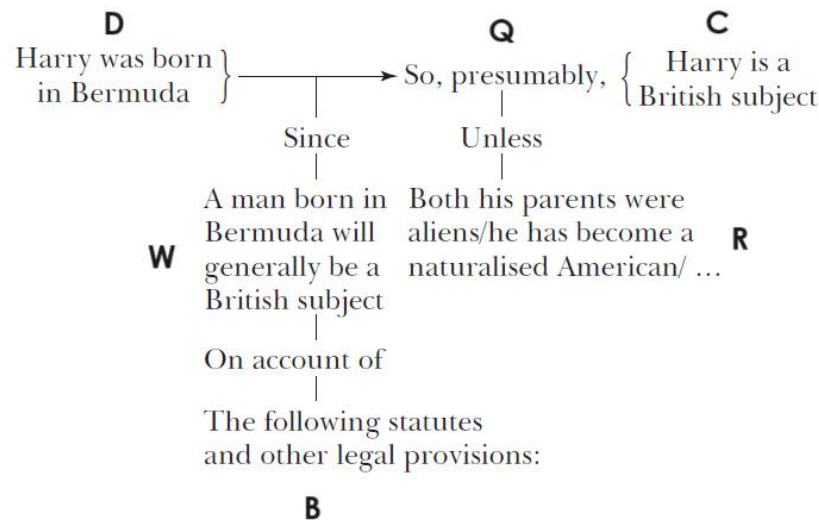
Figure 2. Toulmin's claim, data and warrant (Toulmin, 2003)

These three elements constitute the foundation of an argument. Though, there are instances where the warrant, despite relevant data, does not fully support a claim. In such cases, it becomes necessary to include a *qualifier*(Q). Qualifiers, such as "probably" or "presumably", allow flexibility. For example, consider Figure 2. By including a qualifier, it might be understood that the data may not universally apply to the claim: "Presumably, a man born in Bermuda will be a British subject." This use of qualifiers encourages readers to recognize the possibility that not every man born in Bermuda will necessarily hold a British subject status (Toulmin, 2003).

Immediately after the qualifier, an argument might include a *rebuttal* (R). This component is intended to counter or refute the assumption or warrant when exceptional circumstances arise (Toulmin, 2003). Khoirunisa and Indah (2017) describe it as a way to strengthen or weaken a claim. Linguistic indicators for rebuttals comprise words such as "unless", "if", and "so".

Lastly, in this model, there is an element known as backing (B). Toulmin (2003) posits that there are different kinds of backings. Depending on the field in which an argument is stated, various forms of backings will appear. According to Metaxas et al. (2016), evaluating an argument

_____

depends significantly on the content of its warrant and backing. To follow up on the previously used example, Figure 3 exemplifies one use of backing.

D Harry was born in Bermuda

Q So, presumably,

C Harry is a British subject

Since

Unless

W A man born in Bermuda will generally be a British subject

Both his parents were aliens/he has become a naturalised American/ … **R**

On account of

The following statutes and other legal provisions:

B

Note. This figure exemplifies all the elements of Toulmin's model of argumentation.

Figure 3. Toulmin's claim, data, warrant, rebuttal, qualifier, and backing (Adapted from Toulmin, 2003)

In section five of this article, the dissection and analysis of arguments presented in the document *Argumentos a favor de la tauromaquia*, are offered.

3.2 *Critical discourse analysis and Van Dijk's manipulation theory*

According to Eggins (2005), "No text is free of ideology […] to use language at all is to use it to encode particular positions and values" (p. 11). In Van Dijk's framework, ideology is defined as the "basis of the social representations shared by members of a group" (1998: 8). This means that ideologies enable individuals, as part of a collective, to structure the diverse social beliefs regarding what is true, desirable, ethical, or unacceptable. These organized beliefs guide their actions. Additionally, ideologies can serve as the foundation for specific arguments related to their perspective.

Van Dijk (2006) suggests that manipulation is one of the main concepts in critical Discourse Analysis. He also affirms there are three different approaches that can be used to analyze it: socially, cognitively, and discursively. The first one is manifested in situations where power is exerted unfairly, perpetuating existing social disparities. The cognitive refers to illegitimate domination that confirms social inequality by interfering with processes of understanding and shaping biased mental models and social representations, including knowledge and ideology. And the discursive approach, which is the one mostly used for this article, typically involves familiar patterns and structures of ideological discourse. It includes highlighting positive aspects of "Us" while emphasizing negative aspects of "Them".

Manipulation could be seen as a form of legitimate persuasion if negative connotations were absent. The main distinction lies in the fact that in persuasion, interlocutors are free to believe or act as they choose based on whether they accept the persuader's arguments. In contrast, manipulation often relegates recipients to a more passive role, making them victims of the manipulator (Van Dijk, 2006).

In his framework Van Dijk (2006) states that when analyzing discourse, it is more effective to consider contextual categories, as the ones mentioned before, rather than focusing on textual structures. Figure 4 presents some examples of strategies used for manipulation.

- Overall interaction strategies
  - Positive self-presentation
  - Negative other-presentation
- Macro speech act implying Our 'good' acts and Their 'bad' acts, e.g. accusation, defence
- Semantic macrostructures: topic selection
  - (De-)emphasize negative/positive topics about Us/Them
- Local speech acts implementing and sustaining the global ones, e.g. statements that prove accusations.
- Local meanings Our/Their positive/negative actions
  - Give many/few details
  - Be general/specific
  - Be vague/precise
  - Be explicit/implicit
  - Etc.
- Lexicon: Select positive words for Us, negative words for Them
- Local syntax
  - Active vs passive sentences, nominalizations: (de)emphasize Our/Their positive/negative agency, responsibility
- Rhetorical figures
  - Hyperboles vs euphemisms for positive/negative meanings
  - Metonymies and metaphors emphasizing Our/Their positive/negative properties
- Expressions: sounds and visuals
  - Emphasize (loud, etc.; large, bold, etc.) positive/negative meanings
  - Order (first, last; top, bottom, etc.) positive/negative meanings

Note. This figure lists some of the approaches used across various discourse levels.

Figure 4. Van Dijk's examples of manipulative strategies (Van Dijk, 2006)

After analyzing the structure of the arguments, an interpretation of the underlying ideology is presented in section five of this article.

3.3 *Human-animal relationship, relativism, and speciesism theories*

In our culture, there has been a longstanding history of dominance and viewing other animals as existing only for human use. This perspective highlights the historical relationship between humans and animals, often characterized by exploitation and anthropocentrism. Despite some changes in attitudes and reduced cruelty, widespread abuse still persists, "Billions of animals suffer and die in the name of providing us with meat, with drugs, with entertainment" (Taylor & Signal, 2011: vviii).

The theory of relativism asserts that moral values are shaped by culture, allowing individuals to adhere to their own cultural norms and practices (Ryder, 2017). In essence, this proposition is not entirely unreasonable. However, it is worth a reflecting exercise here: some ancient Mexican cultures once, ritually extracted the still-beating hearts of young individuals as offerings to their gods. Within this historical context, the theory of relativism would imply that anyone who feels empathy for this tradition should be free to practice it. Naturally, in modern times, such a practice poses several implications.

Following the previous it is also relevant to discuss the notion of Speciesism. This term was coined by Richard Ryder in 1972. Over time, the term has been used and redefined not only by him but also by different authors and dictionaries (Ryder, 2017). These attempts have highlighted important aspects inherent to this concept. However, Ryder has made a division to facilitate the understanding of speciesism. He refers to strong speciesism as "the exploitation of nonhumans justified on the grounds that they supposedly lack certain qualities alleged to have moral importance (such as high intelligence, reason, autonomy, a moral sense or a soul)" (p. 50). In contrast, weak speciesism refers to the "exploitation of nonhumans as being justified purely on the grounds that they are of a nonhuman species" (p. 50)

To sacrifice a bull in the name of tradition could be equated to the previous example, here human beings were the highest offering for their gods. However, legislation has progressed regarding the right to life for humans, unlike the rights of non-human lives to survive. This situation may be considered a form of weak speciesism, where non-human animal life is not granted the same legal rights solely because it is not a human life.

4. Methodology

The analysis conducted and presented in this paper used Toulmin's model of argumentation. According to this model, an argument is constructed to give support to a claim (Toulmin, 2003). Everyone can make a claim, and certainly, we all do it all the time. The validity of a claim, when supported with facts or data, may be accepted by more people. Toulmin also suggests that the extent to which it will be taken seriously depends on the quality of the supported argument. The analysis of the document: *Argumentos a favor de la tauromaquia* was based on the quality of the arguments stated by this association. The research questions guiding the analysis were:

1. How is language used to persuade the audience about the importance of preserving bullfighting as part of the cultural heritage and tradition in Mexico?

2. What are the lexical choices employed to communicate bullfighting supporters ideologies to readers of the arguments?

Seventy-six arguments, from the document titled: *Argumentos a favor de la tauromaquia* (Arguments in favor of bullfighting) were analyzed using Toulmin's model of argumentation. As stated before, this model offers six components for every argument: claim, data, warrant, backing, rebuttal and qualifier. The first three elements are considered mandatory while the other three might or might not be present in each of the arguments.

Following the argument analysis, I drew on Van Dijk's (2006) categories of "positive self-representation" and 'other negative representation' from his manipulation theory. The analysis consisted of identifying the claims where these categories were present.

5. Data analysis and discussion

This section presents the findings from the analysis and its discussion. First, I will present some contradictions found within the stated arguments. Next, the results of the analysis made using Toulmin's model of argumentation. Then I will focus on the analysis of the ideology underlying these arguments, using Van Dijk's theory of manipulation. And finally, the presentation of the speciesism ideology, which is mostly portrayed in the *Argumentos a favor de la tauromaquia* document.

5.1 *Title pairs, pet industry, consumerism, three contradictions to consider*

At the beginning of the document, there is an outline that presents a classification for the arguments they will develop (see Figure 5). These category titles appear to be pairs of related or similar topics, such as Ecology – Animal Wellbeing, Industry – Job, and Culture – Tradition. However, the fourth category is labeled Globalization – Enemy. At a first glance, it could be inferred that Globalization and Enemy are related or similar topics, following the same logic of pairs presented in the previous titles. Nevertheless, the fifth category is Science – Truths and Myths, which presents opposing ideas. On one hand, science; on the other, Truths and Myths. This opposite pair in title number five, makes even more confusing title number four. It raises the question about the type of pair that Globalization and Enemy are. It is not clear if they are related topics, as presented in titles one, two and three, or if they are opposites as presented in the following title which is number five. Finally, the last category is Freedom – Towns/Population, which again presents an ambiguous relationship.

ARGUMENTOS A FAVOR DE LA TAUROMAQUIA

1. **Ecología - Bienestar Animal**
2. **Industria – Empleo**
3. **Cultura – Tradición**
4. **Globalización – Enemigo**
5. **Ciencia – Realidades y Mitos**
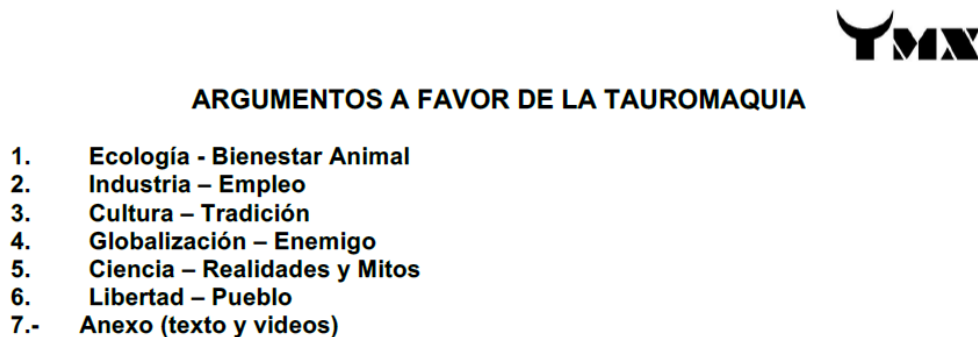6. **Libertad – Pueblo**
7.- **Anexo (texto y videos)**

Figure 5. Arguments categories or outline (Tauromaquia Mexicana A.C.)

The second main contradiction that emerges from the document, *Argumentos en favor de la tauromaquia,* is as follows: The arguments related to the pet industry state that this industry generates a significant revenue, while pet owners make irrational purchases for their pets, thus promoting market consumption. Yet, in category number two, the data they present is all related to the economic benefits of bullfighting, driven by people consuming bullfights. In this part, that data is presented as a benefit for Mexican economy that bullfighting provides to the country. Here an example of both cases:

> • *La industria de las mascotas es de las que más dinero generan actualmente en el mundo, por lo cual hay que alimentar constantemente al consumidor, igualando los valores de los seres humanos a los animales, para así poder seguir consumiendo productos y servicios para mascotas.*
> (The pet industry is one of the most lucrative worldwide, which is why we must constantly feed consumer demand, equating human values with those of animals to cotuiinue consuming pet products and services).

_____

- *La Tauromaquia es catalizadora del desarrollo económico y social de las regiones en donde se practican, pues de ellas se desprenden actividades como: la ganadería, el comercio, la industria, el turismo, la manufactura de artesanías, entre otras.* (Bullfighting catalyzes the economic and social development of the regions where it is practiced, as it gives rise to activities such as livestock farming, commerce, industry, tourism, and handicraft manufacturing among others).

While in the first argument, market consumption is positioned as something that should not happen; in the second one, all the activities that generate consumption are exalted. Besides the obvious contradiction, one can see the use of Van Dijk's self and others-representation categories in his theory of manipulation.

The third and last contradiction I would like to highlight before moving on to the structure analysis of the arguments it the one found in the sixth category, Freedom-Town/population. In this classification there is this argument about bullfighters' community being opposed to every sign of animal mistreatment:

- *Quienes disfrutamos de la Tauromaquia estamos en contra de cualquier manifestación de maltrato animal; para nosotros la afición por esta actividad se entiende a partir del amor y el respeto que tenemos por las especies animales que forman parte de ella.* (Those of us who enjoy bullfighting are against any manifestation of animal mistreatment; for us the passion for this activity arises from the love and respect we have for the animal species that are part of it).

The definition of bullfight in the Collins dictionary is the following:

"a spectacle in which a bull is first provoked in various ways and then maneuvered into position by a matador, whose task is to kill it with the thrust of a sword: it is one of a series in a public program called a corrida, popular in Spain and Spanish America" (22 May 2024).

The concept, as defined in this dictionary, where "a bull is first provoked in various ways" is in clear opposition to the argument that states people who enjoy bullfighting "are against any manifestation of animal mistreatment."

The counterpart argument, where after having said bullfighting supporters love and respect animals, states what follows:

- *Una vez toreado, no tiene sentido seguirlo manteniendo ya que su costo de manutención es muy caro, mejor se sacrifica para dar alimento a cientos de seres humanos, además de tener un beneficio económico.* (Once a bull has been fought in a bullfight, it doesn't make sense to continue maintaining it since its upkeep cost is very expensive. It is better to sacrifice it to provide food for hundreds of human beings and also gain an economic benefit).

These fundamental contradictions are worth of reflection considering that even though they can be interpreted using the self and others-representation proposed by Van Dijk, they do not fit precisely within this framework. Nevertheless, I considered them relevant for the comprehensive analysis conducted in this paper.

5.1 *Composition of the arguments*

Toulmin suggests that an argument is elaborated to support a claim (Toulmin, 2003). In his model, he introduces a category of arguments termed "practical". These arguments emphasize the justification of the claim (Toulmin, 2014). Additionally, the author asserts that testing and evaluating existent ideas might lead to the discovery of entirely new ones, allowing

proponents to scrutinize and assess the validity of their arguments. However, the proponents of the analyzed document, do not appear to have conducted this evaluation of their own arguments.

To begin the analysis of the document *Argumentos a favor de la tauromaquia*, I categorized them according to their elements. The resultant categories were as follows:

- Complete arguments, arguments that presented at least the main elements (claim, data, warrant);

- One element arguments, these refer to statements that present a single element. These statements were typically either claims or data, without any additional elements;

- Incomplete arguments, these were statements presented in a different structure such as questions or demands that I could not categorize among the other categories.

Table 1. provides an overview of the argument classification and some examples for each case.

Table 1. Categories for analysis

Category		Number of arguments	Examples:
Complete arguments		33	El toro de lidia sólo se puede torear una vez, ya que durante la lidia el toro va identificando la diferencia entre la muleta o capote y el ser humano, con lo cual, al volver a ser lidiado por segunda vez embiste directamente al ser humano.
			La Tauromaquia es catalizadora del desarrollo económico y social de las regiones en donde se practican, pues de ellas se desprenden actividades como: la ganadería, el comercio, la industria, el turismo, la manufactura de artesanías, entre otras.
One element arguments	Only claim arguments	23	Una sociedad avanzada debe respetar las libertades.
			La muerte no es mala.
	Only data arguments	15	El primer festejo taurino en México se realizó en
			Existen en México 216 plazas de toros activas.
Incomplete arguments		5	Prohibido prohibir.
			Libertad cultural.

For the following parts of this article, I have decided to continue referring to all statements as "arguments", regardless of whether they contain fewer elements than those Toulmin identified as necessary for an argument. I made this decision based on the fact that the analyzed document labels its statements as arguments.

_____

5.1.1 *Complete arguments*

From the thirty-three arguments that contained at least the three main elements according to Toulmin's model, some were still difficult to follow. While there were some arguments where the warrant was more evident, there were others where the relationship between claim, data, warrant, and supporting bullfighting was more difficult to understand. For example:

- *El toro de lidia se come exactamente igual que cualquier otra res de consumo humano. Incluso su carne es de mejor calidad, ya que este animal fue criado con alimentación de primera, sin químicos para rápida engorda.* (The fighting bull can be eaten exactly the same as any other beef for human consumption. In fact, its meat is of better quality, as this animal was raised with top-quality feed, without chemicals for rapid fattening).

Claim 1: The fighting bull can be eaten exactly the same as any other beef for human consumption.

Claim 2: Its meat is of better quality.

Data: This animal was raised with top-quality feed, without chemicals for rapid fattening.

Warrant: Fighting bulls are the same as other kinds of bulls, they exist to be eaten by humans. Due to the attention paid during their breeding, fighting bull meat is of better quality than that of other beef.

Whereas the claims and data are very clear, the relationship between them and bullfighting is not as straightforward. Instead of focusing on the support for bullfighting, the argument emphasizes the benefit of consuming these animals over other and does not directly relate to the bullfight instead. Toulmin (2003) foresaw this possible situation: the warrant may not satisfy a contestant completely. In such situations, the other elements of the argument are intended to support the claim. Nevertheless, this was not the case for this argument.

One more example:

- *La mitad de las ganaderías en México se encuentran en municipios de alta marginación, estas contribuyen a las oportunidades de empleos en dichas zonas *SAGARPA[1].* (Half of the cattle ranches in Mexico are located in municipalities with high marginalization. These ranches contribute to employment opportunities in those areas).

Claim: Cattle ranches in Mexico contribute to employment opportunities in those areas.

Data: Half of the cattle ranches in Mexico are located in municipalities with high marginalization.

Warrant: Supporting bullfighting events, contributes to the survival of these cattle ranches that provide job opportunities in marginalized areas.

Backing: SAGARPA's data.

This second example is easier to follow, as the support for bullfighting events is more easily deduced in its warrant. However, the government institution that provides the supporting data has changed names long ago. The fact that they continue to use the old name raises suspicions regarding the validity, reliability of the data. Unlike the previous example, this argument reveals one of the proposals that this organization makes in favor of maintaining bullfighting. While the first example presents an argument in favor of the benefits of this meat for human consumption

_____

[1] On December 1st, 2018, SAGARPA *Secretaría de Agricultura, Ganadería, Desarrollo Rural, Pesca y Alimentación* (Secretariat of Agriculture, Cattle Raise, Fishing and Rural Development) changed its name to SADER (Secretaría de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural). However, it is still performing its same functions The document was downloaded from Tauromaquia Mexicana's website and was analyzed in May 2024.

over other livestock, in this second example, support for bullfighting is clearer. Similar to this second argument, that maintains the same topic (bullfighting as a crucial element for the wellbeing of the communities where it is practiced) there were two more arguments.

Additionally, to the previous theme, bullfighting as a crucial element for the wellbeing of the community. There were three more that can be easily related to supporting bullfighting events. Table 2 shows the themes with some examples.

Table 2. Subcategories of arguments grouped by similar
themes and number of arguments in each theme

Theme or topic	Number of arguments	Example
Bulls and bullfighting events part of cultural heritage of the country	6	Al ser expresión de la cultura popular de nuestro país, es parte inalienable de la identidad de nuestro pueblo. Su existencia permite, además, la conservación de patrimonios culturales de las localidades en donde se practican.
		As an expression of our country's popular culture, it is an integral part of our people's identity. Its existence also allows for the preservation of cultural heritage in the localities where it is practiced
Bulls not being mistreated but receiving the best cares.	4	Un toro de lidia es criado como deportista de alto rendimiento, con los mejores cuidados. Alimentación y veterinarios de primera.
		A fighting bull is raised like a high-performance athlete, with top-notch care. First-rate nutrition and veterinarians are provided for the bull
Bulls and bullfighting as a crucial element for the wellbeing of the communities where it is practiced	3	En conjunto son 170,095.94 hectáreas destinadas en México a la crianza del toro de lidia. Ascendiendo a un valor de $12,000,000,000.00 *SAGARPA
		Together, 170, 095.94 hectares in Mexico are dedicated to the breeding of fighting bulls, amounting to a value of $12, 000, 000, 000.00 *SAGARPA
Cattle raisers and fighting bulls being essential for ecological equilibrium	2	Las ganaderías de toros de lidia generan riqueza de flora y fauna, se convierten clave en el equilibrio ecológico
		Bullfighting cattle ranches generaate wealth for flora and fauna, becoming a key element in ecological balance

The first category shown in the table is the one that presents the larger number of arguments. The warrant for these arguments is related to the significance of bullfighting as a part of Mexican culture and heritage. Following that theme, another set of arguments asserts that the bulls are not mistreated; on the contrary, they receive very special and dedicated care while they are alive. This last part is important, just mentioning that 'while they are alive' they get the best treatment, implies that they will not be alive longer, otherwise the word 'while' would not be necessary. Furthermore, in this set of arguments the focus is on the wellbeing and special care they receive *while* they live. Emphasizing the good and hiding the fact that they are being raised to be killed in a huge festivity.

The third and fourth themes relate to the economic and environmental benefits that this activity provides to the places where it is carried out. The forty-three additional arguments were classified into three groups. In the next section, I present the analysis that was conducted on them.

_____

5.1.2 *One element and incomplete arguments*

In this category, I grouped the remaining arguments because according to Toulmin's model they are incomplete. Twenty-three of them presented only one or more claims, fifteen others offered only factual data, and the extra five were incomplete statements and questions. Table 3 illustrates these arguments.

Table 3. One element and incomplete arguments

Only claim	23	El animal no entiende el concepto de la muerte.
		El antitaurinismo es una moda urbana.
Only data	15	Sólo se sacrifica el 10% del ganado bravo en una plaza de toros.
		Se realizan más de 500 festejos por año.
Incomplete	5	No a la doble moral.
		¿Quién tiene mayores derechos? ¿la pulga a vivir dentro de perro o el perro a quitarse la pulga?

As shown in table 3, the majority of the proposed arguments in favor of bullfighting did not present the minimal elements necessary, according to Toulmin's model, to be considered as arguments. Nevertheless, I would like to draw attention to one of them in particular.

- *Los animales no tienes derechos ni obligaciones. Derecho: Conjunto de principios y normas, expresivos de una idea de justicia y de orden, que regulan las relaciones humanas en toda sociedad y cuya observancia puede ser impuesta de manera coactiva.*[2] (Animals do not have rights or obligations. Law refers to a set of principles and norms that express an idea of justice and order, regulating human relations in any society. Compliance with these principles can be enforced coercively).

The main claim is that animals do not have rights or obligations. The subsequent statement, apparently intended to provide data supporting the claim, is a definition of the word *"derecho"* which in Spanish can mean both 'right' (as in human rights) and "law" (as in law school). To guide the reader toward forming their own opinion on whether animals have rights or not, or even persuading them to agree with the claim, it might have been more effective to provide a definition of the term "right" or an explanation of the implications of rights. Instead, the definition of "law" in this case only serves to make the claim ambiguous.

So far, the analysis has mainly focused on the structure of the arguments, I have highlighted whether the elements proposed in Toulmin's model were used or not to support these arguments. In the next section, I will explore the underlying ideology using Van Dijk's theory of manipulation.

5.2 *Theory of manipulation*

Drawing from Van Dijk's theory of manipulation, we can discern language strategies where manipulators emphasize their positive attributes, while simultaneously highlighting negative aspects of others. In the *Argumentos a favor de la tauromaquia*'s document there were several arguments that presented these characteristics. The following three arguments illustrate positive self-representation:

_____

[2]All arguments were copied from the document exactly as they are written, no corrections nor modifications were made.

_____

"Positive self-presentation"

• *La Tauromaquia* <u>*promueve la integración de las familias*</u>*,* <u>*al suscitar la sana*</u> <u>*convivencia entre sus miembros; asimismo,*</u> <u>*constituyen un elemento de cohesión*</u> <u>*social*</u> *para individuos y grupos de amigos que gustan de concurrir a los eventos.* (Bullfighting *promotes family integration* by <u>fostering healthy interaction among its</u> <u>members</u>. Additionally, it <u>serves as a social bonding element</u> for individuals and groups of friends who enjoy attending these events).

• <u>*Las corridas de toros es un espectáculo que impulsa valores*</u> *que trascienden en el tiempo y que han sido heredados de padres a hijos de generación en generación.* <u>*Estos valores son la dignidad, la libertad, el respeto, el amor, la tolerancia, y la*</u> <u>*igualdad, como a sus tradiciones; y también a los animales*</u>*.* (<u>Bullfighting is a</u> <u>spectacle that promotes values</u> transcending time and has been passed down from parents to children for generations. <u>These values include dignity, freedom, respect,</u> <u>love, tolerance, and equality, as well as adherence to traditions and consideration for</u> <u>animals</u>).

• *Los protagonistas y aficionados de las corridas de toros,* <u>*estamos a favor de que*</u> <u>*se legisle para proteger a las especies animales*</u> *que son utilizados para fines ajenos a sus características naturales. De igual forma,* <u>*considerados que todas las especies*</u> <u>*animales deben de ser tratados con dignidad y respeto*</u>*.* (*The protagonists and fans of bullfighting are in favor of legislation to protect animal species* that are used for purposes unrelated to their natural characteristics. Similarly, <u>we believe that all</u> <u>animal species should be treated with dignity and respect</u>).

The positive elements highlighted in these three arguments are related to family integration through bullfighting events, while also promoting healthy coexistence between communities. Additionally, they claim to be in favor of legislation that protects all animal species, emphasizing the need for treating them with dignity and respect.

What is not being said in these arguments or what is being minimized is the actual event of bullfighting. As mentioned earlier, there is one person on foot or on horseback, provoking the bull and using different instruments to infringe physical pain and wounds it until it is ultimately killed by a sword. This represents the negative side of the activity that is being hidden or minimized in these and the rest of the presented arguments.

On the other hand, to complete the manipulation strategy according to Van Dijk's (2006) list of strategies, the representation of opponents of bullfighting, highlights the negative aspects of that group. The following three arguments illustrate negative representation of others:

"Negative others-presentation"

• *No existe registro alguno que un antitaurino cuide, crie, mantenga etc. a un toro de lidia.* (<u>There is no record of an anti-bullfighter taking care of, raising, maintaining,</u> <u>etc., a fighting bull</u>)

• *El ser vegano es* <u>*una decisión*</u> *del ser humano* <u>*(no natural),*</u> *que hay que respetar;* <u>*el problema radica que el vegano quiere que el resto de la población nos*</u> <u>*volvamos como ellos. Radicalismos, incluso en ocasiones violento.*</u> (Being vegan is a human <u>decision (not natural)</u> that must be respected; <u>the problem lies</u> in the fact that <u>vegans want the rest of the population to become like them. Radicalism, sometimes</u> <u>event violent</u>.)

• <u>*Los pseudo animalistas agreden a los otros seres humanos*</u>*, amparados en que ellos defienden a los animales.* <u>*intimidan y violentan al opositor.*</u> *Se sienten equivocadamente con la moral superior.* (<u>The pseudo animalists attack other</u> <u>human beings</u>, claiming that they defend animals. <u>They intimidate and harm</u> <u>opponents.</u> They mistakenly believe they have superior morality).

_____

These arguments first point out that opponents have never taken care of a bull, thus they do not know what this activity entails. Next, they question the decision of vegans not to eat meat, claiming within what is in the parenthesis that their decision is not natural. Additionally, they assert that vegans want all people to become vegans like they do. Furthermore, they accuse these groups of people of being violent and radical.

According to Van Dijk (2006), the differences between manipulation and persuasion are never definite. Depending on the context and people involved in a message, it may be more or less manipulative. However, the fact that the majority of these so-called arguments do not present data or backing to their claims shows that they are not genuinely intended to support the activity but rather to manipulate audiences into adopting certain beliefs.

5.2 *Underlying ideologies*

As shown in the previous analysis of these arguments, bulls are often referred to as *"animales de consumo humano"* (animals for human consumption). Just as racist and sexist attitudes were once unnoticed, treating other living species as inferior (or superior) constitutes a form of discrimination. Theories on speciesism emerged in the 1970's, prompting a reconsideration of animal treatment in fields such as medicine, cosmetics and even entretaiment. Consequently, arguments in the document, *Argumentos a favor de la tauromaquia,* advocating for the preservation of tradition and heritage, could be subject to scrutiny. While preserving traditions is undoubtedly important, it cannot serve as an excuse to mistreat any other nonhuman animal.

6. Conclusion

This analysis was conducted with the aim of understanding what are the ideologies underlying support to bullfighting. By analyzing the elements of the arguments in favor of bullfighting the results demonstrated that there are more emotional and dogmatic claims rather than data or solid arguments to support these events. As it was presented in section four, the majority of the presented arguments were isolated claims and data with no link among them or within supporting this activity. This may be both a limitation of the study and an important finding. I refer to it as limitation because the linguistic analysis did not yield the expected outcome, namely, a straightforward dissection and explanation of language. However, I also consider it a significant finding because it allowed me to focus later on and delve deeper into the underlying ideology of the arguments. Future research might be conducted following this methodology to similar documents or positionality papers, from different organization. The findings among various organizations may show some differences or similarities between them.

Finally, I would like to end this article with one quote of Taylor and Signal (2011) that highlights humans and nonhuman animals relationships: "To think about our relationships with other animals is to engage in a serious intellectual challenge" (p. xviii). For centuries we have distinguished ourselves from other living animals. By being human beings consciously or unconsciously we have developed a dominant relationship with them. As Taylor and Signal (2011) suggest, just by reflecting about this relationship we may initiate an intellectual revolution for ourselves.

References

Badorrey Martín, B. (2009). Principales prohibiciones canónicas y civiles de las corridas de toros. *Provincia*, (22), 107-146. http://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=55513213006.

Cohen, E. (2014). Bullfighting and tourism. *Tourism Analysis, 19*, 545-556. http://dx.doi.org/10.3727/108354214X14116690097738

Collins dictionary (n.d.). bullfight in American English. In *Collins dictionary*. Retrieved 22 May 2024, from https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/bullfight.

Cordeiro-Rodrigues, L., & Achino, E. (2017). A case study on moral disengagement and rationalization in the context of Portuguese bullfighting. *Polish Sociological Review*, *3*(r99), 315-327. https://www.ceeol.com/search/article-detail?id=579789.

Cordero del Campillo, M. (26th October 2005). *Sobre las relaciones del hombre con los animales.* Lección inaugural del Curso 2005-2006 del Programa Interuniversitario de la Experiencia, pronunciada en el Aula San Isidoro bajo los auspicios de la Junta de Castilla y León y el Rectorado de la Universidad de León. https://historiadelaveterinaria.es/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Relaciones-hombre-y-animales.pdf.

Eggins, S. (2005). *An introduction to systemic functional linguistics* (2nd ed.). Continuum.

Flores Mercado, G. (2023). Bullfights, tourism and intangible cultural heritage in Mexico: A dissonant heritage. In A. López López, G. F. Quintero Venegas & C. Kline (Eds.), *Tourism, heritage and commodification of non-human animals, a post-humanist reflection* (pp. 85-98). CAB International.

Khoirunisa, A., & Indah, R. N. (2017). Argumentative statements in the 2016 presidential debates of the U.S: A critical discourse analysis. *Journal of English Education and Linguistics Studies*, *4*(2), 155-173. https://doi.org/10.30762/jeels.v4i2.347

Metaxas, N., Potari, D., & Zacharides, T. (2016). Analysis of a teacher's pedagogical arguments using Toulmin's model and argumentation schemes. *Educational Studies in Mathematics*, *93*, 383-397. https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10649-016-9701-z.

Ortiz-Millán, G. (2014). Ética para matador: Savater, los toros y la ética. *Tópicos*, (46), 205-236. https://www.scielo.org.mx/scielo.php?pid=S0188-66492014000100008&script=sci_abstract&tlng=pt.

Perales, C., & Thouverez, L. (2014). Building Spanish and Catalan identity in the debate on banning bullfighting. *Catalan Journal of Communication & Cultural Studies*, *6*(1), 55-73. https://doi.org/10.1386/cjcs.6.1.55_1

Quintero Venegas, G. J., & López López, A. (2018). Tauromaquia y turismo oscuro en México: las corridas de toros como prácticas no éticas. *Teoría y Práxis. Turismo, negocios, recursos naturales*, *(212)*, 197-228. http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12249/1325.

Ryder, R. D. (2017). *Speciesism, pianism and happiness. A morality for the twenty-first century*. Societas.

Sáez, P. (1998). Sobre la fiesta de los toros en el mundo Romano. *Revista de Estudios Taurinos*, *8*, 51-68. https://dialnet.unirioja.es/descarga/articulo/5095980.pdf.

_____

Simon, S. (2008). Using Toulmin's argument pattern in the evaluation of argumentation in school science. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, *31*(3), 277-289. https://doi.org/10.1080/17437270802417176

Taylor, N., & Signal, T. (2011). *Theorizing animals. Re-thinking humanimal relations.* Brill.

Toulmin, S. (2014). Toulmin method. *Toulmin and his Model, 7.*

Toulmin, S. E. (2003). *The uses of argument*. Cambridge University Press.

Vázquez Mantecón, M. C. (2013). ¡ Toros sí!,¡ Toros no! del tiempo cuando Benito Juárez prohibió las corridas de toros. *Historia Mexicana, 63*(1), 171-203. https://www.jstor.org/stable/23608660.

Van Dijk, T. A. (1998). *Ideology*. Sage Publications.

Van Dijk, T. A. (2006). Discourse and manipulation. *Discourse and Society*, *17*(3), 359-383. https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926506060250

Widener, M. (2014, December 17). Yale Law Library Lillian Goldman Law Library. *A papal bull against bullfighting*. https://library.law.yale.edu/news/papal-bull-against-bullfighting.

_____

COAS